

GATSBY'S MORGAN LE FAY

In GG, F's ironic commentary on the corruption of the American Dream is deftly correlated with the degradation of traditional romantic ideals of chivalry and love. This purpose is manifested in the narrator's frequent references to the latter subject as it bears upon Gatsby's aspirations, for example his quest for "the king's daughter, the golden girl" and his "following of a grail." In context all such allusions are connected with Daisy Fay. Under the circumstances it seems to me that F is deliberately characterizing Daisy Fay as the evil queen of the modern land of Faerie, the America of the beautiful, the rich, and the damned. Appropriately, then, when Gatsby, the mock redeemer knight, arrives on the scene, it is inevitable that he succumb to the enchantments of the reincarnation of Morgan le Fay. As the latter was wont to deceive all her lovers, so is Daisy. And in each case the outcome was the same: the hastening of the Waste Land and the destruction of redemptive love. (Of course, F knew his Eliot well.)

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A NOTE ON THE "GREEN LIGHT"

It is debatable whether F was very familiar with Coleridge's poetry, but there is an interesting parallel between the ending of GG and a passage in Coleridge's "Dejection Ode." The green light that Gatsby saw on Daisy's pier is almost an echo of a similar image in the third stanza of the

Coleridge ode: "Though I should gaze forever / On that green light that lingers in the west: / I may not hope from outward forms to win / The passion and the life, whose fountains are within." Although the light Gatsby sees is in East Egg, F symbolically transfers it to the west by making it a symbol for Gatsby's dream. The dream is "behind him, somewhere back in the vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night"—or, in the west.

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F AND THE DAY OF THE LOCUST

Nathaniel West's *THE DAY OF THE LOCUST* (1939) and *TITN* are concerned with the death of our culture. West and F both conceive the 20th-century man as a "masquerader." The term comes from West's novel, in which Harry Greener is described as being "almost all face, like a mask" (Bantam Classic edition, p. 67), a novel in which nearly all the characters are masqueraders in their self-deception. Similar masquerade imagery is found in *TITN*. At one point Dick Diver appears "clad in transparent black lace drawers. Close inspection revealed that actually they were lined with flesh-colored cloth" (*PORTABLE F*, p. 193).

It is this counterpoint of illusion versus reality which runs through both novels. Diver's masquerade in feminine underwear is significant since he symbolically is emasculated by Nicole, who saps him of his masculinity and ambition. West's painter, Tod Hackett, follows a similar pattern. His life is wrecked through loving and wishing to help Faye Greener, who like Nicole is an abnormal girl driven by abnormal impulses.

Effective scenes in both novels use a movie set as a microcosm of the world at large, showing the falsity of our present values. West's description of his set includes a "papier mache sphinx," a "lawn of fibre," "celluloid swans," and people "eating cardboard food in front of a cellophane waterfall" (p. 79). Further on the set we encounter a likeness of the god Eros, lying "face downward in a pile of old newspapers and bottles" (p. 80). West is clearly giving us a novel of the failure of love and the death of culture. The most symbolic image is the studio's central dumping ground of sets, flats, and props, which West compares to Janvier's "Sargasso Sea." His Hollywood is indeed a Sargasso of the American imagination. Yet this effective device was anticipated by F, when Rosemary visits the studio: "The bizarre debris of some recent picture, a decayed street scene in India, a great cardboard whale, a monstrous tree bearing cherries large as basketballs. . . There were a quicklunch shack and two barnlike stages and

everywhere about the lot, groups of waiting, hopeful, painted faces. . ." (PORTABLE F, p. 173).

Both novels portray a world of ruthlessness and violence; both authors envisioned this world as one which tests one's ability to survive under brute force. Perhaps the similarities in concept of the two works have not been examined before because TITN is not thought of as a Hollywood novel. F's movie set is located on the Riviera, and he concentrated on the Riviera as his apotheosis of duplicity. We know that West and F knew each other in Hollywood. How well West knew TITN is open to speculation.

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JAPANESE EDITIONS OF F

Translated titles are in angle brackets.

<GG, "Babylon Revisited," "The Rich Boy">. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1957.
Trans. Takashi Nazaki.

<GG>. Tokyo: Kadokawa-shoten, 1957. Trans. Saburo Onuki.

<"Babylon Revisited," "The Cut-Glass Bowl," "Absolution">. Tokyo:
Kadokawa-shoten, 1957. Trans. Junshu Jijima.

<"May Day," "The Rich Boy," "Sleeping & Waking," "The Crack-Up">.
Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1958. Trans. Yokichi Miyamoto & Reiji Nagakawa.

<TSOP, TITN, "Babylon Revisited," "Family in the Wind," "Winter
Dreams">. Tokyo: Arechishuppansha, 1957. Trans. Haotaro
Tatsunokuchi, Katsuji Takamura, & Ryoichi Sato.

MODERN AMERICAN SHORT STORIES. Tokyo: Bunken Shobo, 1960.
Includes parallel English and Japanese texts of "3 Hours Between
Planes" & "Financing Finnegan." Trans. Ryoichi Sato & Motoshi
Karita.

THE EGG & OTHER STORIES. Ed. Yokichi Miyamoto. Tokyo:
Eihosha, 1955. Includes English text of "Absolution."

<"Babylon Revisited," "May Day," "Crazy Sunday">. Tokyo:
Mikasashobo, 1955. Trans. Ko Shimizu.

<"Winter Dreams," "Bernice Bobs her Hair," "Absolution," "The Dia-
mond as Big as the Ritz">. Tokyo: Eihosha, 1956. Trans. Wase
Nishi & Sakae Morioka.

A NIGHT AT THE FAIR & FORGING AHEAD. Ed. Yoshihide Ueki.
Kyoto: Yamaguchi Shoten, 1961. English texts.

TWO SHORT STORIES OF F. Ed. Mitsou Yoshida. Tokyo: Shohakusha,
1960. English texts of "Rich Boy" & "The Last of the Belles."

- THE CRACK-UP. Ed. Hitoshi Miyata. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1958. English texts of "Sleeping & Waking," "The Crack-Up," "Handle with Care," & "Pasting it Together."
- CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SHORT STORIES III. Ed. Takashi Nozaki & Masao Takahashi. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1956. Includes English text of "A Woman with a Past."
- BABYLON REVISITED. Ed. Yoshitaka Sakai. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1959. English text.
- MAY DAY. Ed. Toshisaburo Koyama & Ken-ichi Haya. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1958. English text.
- <AMERICAN SHORT STORIES>. Tokyo: Arechishuppansha, 1960. Includes "The Scandal Detectives."
- Ishi, Ichiro. <THE LITERATURE OF DECAY>. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 1958. A critical study of F.

F'S REPUTATION IN JAPAN

I have heard that F has achieved increasing popularity in America since World War II, and almost the same thing may be said of his reputation in Japan, for while even his name was not known in Japan before the war, 16 editions of F are in print now. While Hemingway, Anderson, Lewis, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Caldwell, and Wolfe are always referred to in the studies of American literature published in Japan before World War II—and many articles on these writers were published, F's name does not even appear in these books, and no article on him appeared before the war. But he is always referred to in the studies published since the war, and articles on him are published every year. This is certainly due to the fact that F's works appealed to the disillusioned young Japanese after the war; but F's popularity in Japan is also the result of the interest in American literature that has developed as relations between Japan and America have grown closer. Before the war, in many colleges American literature was included in English literature, but since the war many colleges have American literature chairs. Indeed, it may be said that as F has become popular in his own country since the war, he has been taken up by Japanese scholars and students as if he were a rising writer. But he is not so popular in Japan as Hawthorne, Poe, Twain, Pearl Buck, and Margaret Mitchell. Perhaps he is not read among the general public as widely even as Hemingway, Faulkner, Caldwell, and Steinbeck. It may be that F is read chiefly by young Japanese intellectuals, for 7 of the 16 editions of F are textbooks for college students, and one edition with its Japanese translation facing the English text is published for students to study by them-

selves. Only one book on F's life and work has been published, but others will be published in the near future.

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F LETTERS AT NEWBERRY

Although the Newberry Library holds important collections of manuscript material by Midwestern writers, it has only three F letters. Two of these are to Sherwood Anderson. The first, a 12-line ALS written from Great Neck, Long Island, is undated but can be placed in April 1923, since in it F refers to the publication "this month" of Thomas Boyd's first novel [THROUGH THE WHEAT] and praises highly Anderson's MANY MARIAGES (published in Feb. 1923), which he recently reviewed. (James Schevill, however, in his 1951 book on Anderson, p. 177, dates the letter 1925.) The other letter to Anderson is dated 11 Oct. 1933, La Paix, Roger's Forge, Towson, Md., and is a 3-line TLS concerning an article about Ring Lardner's death. The third Newberry letter is a 14-line TLS from the same Maryland address, dated 1 June 1933, to Malcolm Cowley. It is a reply to Cowley's request for permission to use in a book part of "Echoes of the Jazz Age" (EXILE'S RETURN, Chapter VII, Section 4); F comments on his plans for that article, on a recent visit of Cowley's, and on the hard work he is doing.

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CHECKLIST

(All material 1961 unless otherwise noted.)

- Bready, J. H. "Books & Authors," BALTIMORE EVENING SUN (22 Oct.). Article on Turnbull's forthcoming biography.
- Brucoli, M. J. "Selection of F's Tales Inadequate," RICHMOND NEWS-LEADER (6 Sept.). Review of 6TJA&.
- Coleman, T. C. "The Social & Moral Criticism of F," DISS. ABSTRACTS. XX, 3289 (U. of S. Cal.).
- Fabricant, N. 13 FAMOUS PATIENTS. NY: Pyramid.
- F. THE BODLEY HEAD F, IV. Contains B&D and stories. Forthcoming.
- "La fete d'enfants," CANDIDE (3 May 1927). "The Baby Party," trans. V. Llona.

- GG. Harmondsworth: Penguin Modern Classics #746.
 "My Lost City," THE BEST FROM COSMOPOLITAN, ed. Richard Gehman. N.Y.: Avon.
- TITN. Harmondsworth: Penguin Modern Classics #906.
 TENDRE EST LA NUIT. Brussels: Les Editions Biblis, 1953. Trans. M. Chevalley.
- "Winter Dreams," THE BEDSIDE TALES, ed. Peter Arno. N.Y.: Wm. Penn, 1945. Also Armed Services Edition reprint.
- Forgue, Guy J., ed. LETTERS OF H. L. MENCKEN. N.Y.: Knopf. Includes splendid letters to F. Review of this book by Charles Poor, NY TIMES (19 Sept.), p. 37, notes that a letter listed to F is almost certainly to his daughter.
- Geraghty, K. & Bodine, A. A. "Scottie Lanahan's 'Wildest Dream,'" BALTIMORE SUNDAY SUN MAGAZINE (8 Oct.), 14, 16, 17. References to F.
- Gerstenberger, D. & Henrick, G. THE AMERICAN NOVEL 1789-1959: A CHECKLIST OF TWENTIETH CENTURY CRITICISM. Denver: Swallow.
- Graham, Sheilah & Frank, Gerould. BELOVED INFIDEL. London: Transworld.
- Hecht, Ben. CHARLIE. N.Y.: Harper, 1957. References to F in this biography of Charles Mac Arthur.
- Lemaire, M. "Failure & Success of F's Work," REVUE DES LANGUES VIVANTES, XXXVI, 13-45.
- Lister, Walter, Jr. "What the Russian People are Reading," NY HERALD-TRIBUNE BOOKS (13 Aug.). Elena Romanova: "American Literature beginning I think, with F, treats sex too freely."
- Moore, James R. "F. S. F. in Triplicate," STATEMENT X (Spring 1957), 61-66.
- "Queries & Answers," NYTBR (23 July), 27. Answers to query about "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."
- Rice, C. F. "Stage Whispers," MILWAUKEE SENTINEL (15 Oct.), 7. Defends F against Hemingway's wisecrack that the very rich "have more money."
- Satterwhite, J. N. "The Midsummer Fires in East Egg: A Note on the Technique in GG," BALL STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE FORUM, I, 43-48.
- Schorer, M. SINCLAIR LEWIS. N.Y.: McGraw-Hill. F letter about MAIN STREET and passing references.
- Shain, C. F. SCOTT FITZGERALD. U. of Minn. Pamphlets on American Writers. Dec.

Sherwood, J. "F's 'Darkest Hour' At La Paix," BALTIMORE EVENING SUN (13 Sept.), 47. Maudlin article inspired by the razing of La Paix.
Stearns, Harold. THE STREET I KNOW. N.Y.: Furman, 1935. Reference to F, p. 378.

Vallette, J. "Bibliographie recente de F," MERCURE de FRANCE #1150 (1959), 330-332.

F PARTY . . . On 24 Sept. a party was held at the Overseas Press Club in N.Y. to mark the 65th anniversary of F's birth. The party was organized by Michael J. Tatich, who hopes to make it an annual affair.

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